

Being a Spiritually Minded Christian
Part Five
The Word of God as the Bread of Life

- *As believers we have a choice: We can be naturally minded, carnally minded, or spiritually minded.*

1 Corinthians 2:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

- *As Christians we can have a spiritual mind which is to think the thoughts of God and to see and evaluate circumstances and events from God's perspective, which is both heavenly and eternal.*
- *As Christians we can have a natural mind which sees and evaluates life only from this temporal physical earthly perspective.*
- *The natural mind sees things only from the natural perspective and either does not acknowledge the existence of a spiritual realm, or does not recognize the value or the activities of the spiritual realm.*
- *As Christians we can have a carnal mind which sees and evaluates life from a purely selfish perspective seeking to satisfy the fleeting lusts of the flesh. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." (Romans 8:7).*
- *The three areas that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians are our relationship to the Word of God, Prayer, and Christian Fellowship.*
- *Today we are going to continue to explore how to develop into spiritually minded Christians in relationship to the Word of God—the Bible.*
- *Of the three foundational principles that enable us to develop into spiritually minded Christians, it is the Bible that grounds us in the truth and provides a spiritual compass to ensure we do not stray from being Christ-centered.*
- *Though experience validates our faith, it is the Word of God, the Bible, that establishes our faith.*
- *There are many aspects to our relationship with the Word of God, the Bible, which are essential for us to develop into spiritually minded Christians.*
- *Two weeks ago we established the reliability and the authority of the Bible.*

- *Last week we looked at the Word of God as spiritual water in terms of the laver which both cleanses and refreshes.*
- *This week we are going to study the Word of God in terms of the Table of Showbread—the Bread of Life.*

Matthew 4:1–4 (NKJV)

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

³Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

⁴But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”

- *As we study how Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, one thing becomes apparent. Jesus experienced temptation! Everyone experiences temptation. Temptation is not sin—yielding to temptation is sin.*
- *In fact, when temptations come our way it is an opportunity for our faith to shine as we say “yes” to God and “no” to the flesh and the devil.*
- *In this passage of Scripture, Jesus perfectly exemplifies how to deal with temptation.*
- *Of the three temptations that Jesus experienced in the wilderness, the one that deals with turning stones into bread, appears to be the least clear with regard to the true nature of the temptation.*
- *The devil also tempted Jesus by saying, “if You will fall down and worship me I will freely give You all the kingdoms of this world.” It is extremely clear that it is sin to worship anyone or anything besides God. Had Jesus succumbed, the temptation would have short cut God’s plan of redemption, because Jesus would have bypassed the suffering of Calvary.*
- *However, in reality, the deception of this temptation is found in the old “bait and switch” that any sly con-artist employs by making the buyer think he is getting one thing and ends up with something quite different. Not only would mankind have remained in the grip of the devil, but Jesus Himself would have become his prey.*
- *The devil also tempted Jesus by saying, “if You are the Son of God then jump down from the pinnacle of the Temple and have Your Father send His angels to save you. Prove to everyone who you are.” It is clear that it is both sinful and foolish to deliberately test God. It is blatantly prideful to think we can act as we please and not expect negative consequences for our bad or sinful choices.*

- *In this first temptation, after forty days of fasting, Jesus was naturally hungry and the devil simply said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”*
- *Later in Jesus’ ministry He multiplied a few loaves and a couple of fish and fed a multitude of people. In fact He performed this miracle not just once but twice! When Jesus performed this miracle the needs of the people were met, everyone was amazed, and God was glorified. So, if multiplying the bread so hungry people could eat brought glory to God, what was wrong with taking some stones and turning them into bread? In fact, the miracle of turning stones into bread would have been far more impressive than multiplying the loaves and the fish!*
- *The answer to understanding the nature of this temptation is found in a teaching that Jesus gave just a few chapters later.*

Matthew 7:7-11 NKJV

[7] "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [8] For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. [9] Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? [10] Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? [11] If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

- *In Matthew 7, Jesus taught us a few things about the character of God the Father—He is faithful, generous, and loving!*
- *We, as His children, can ask, seek, and knock with confidence knowing that as we do, our Father in Heaven will never fail to answer us with the very things we need, “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”*
- *God may not always give us what we want but He, as our wise and loving Father, will always provide us with what we need if we ask Him from a sincere and humble heart. “The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.” (Psalms 25:9).*
- *In Matthew 7, Jesus reinforced His point that we can fully trust in the goodness of our Heavenly Father by saying that if our earthly fathers, who are both sinful and unreliable, give good things to their children when they ask, how much more will our Heavenly Father do so. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”*
- *David himself declared that God’s faithfulness far exceeds the faithfulness of human parents. While our earthly fathers and mothers may fail us, our*

- Heavenly Father will never fail. “When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.” (Psalms 27:10).*
- *After Jesus had been fasting in the wilderness for forty days and was hungry, the devil appeared to Him in order to tempt Him.*
 - *The devil began his temptation with these words: “**If** You are the Son of God,” not only questioning who Jesus is, but also questioning His relationship with the One who sent Him, His Father.*
 - *Then the devil really intensified the temptation, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”*
 - *With this one statement, the devil tried to question the goodness of God in two distinct ways.*
 - *First, “If God is Your Father, what kind of Father is He to provide you with nothing but stones to eat in your time of hunger and need?”*
 - *Second, “There is no use talking to Your Father since it is apparent He neither cares for You nor is attentive to Your prayers. You are going to have to meet Your own needs and speak to these stones Yourself and turn them into bread.” You will have to be your own provider, because Your Father is an unreliable provider.*
 - *The culmination of the devil’s attack on the character of God was not only to try to get Jesus to agree that His Father was not good, but to tempt Jesus to act independently of His Father—to be His own provider.*
 - *However, as Jesus affirmed many times, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” (John 5:19).*
 - *Naturally and carnally minded Christians act independently of God. However, the spiritually minded Christian learns to constantly depend on God for everything.*
 - *A spiritually minded Christian is not only aware of their own frailties and limitations, but is also fully confident in God’s faithfulness and power to work through them. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13).*
 - *The first temptation was a direct attack on Jesus’ relationship with His Father, “Is Your Father good and can He be trusted no matter what circumstances You may face?”*

- *Jesus taught about the goodness and faithfulness of God, but now He was confronted by a very difficult circumstance. “Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?” Jesus found Himself in the wilderness alone and hungry and all He had were stones and a serpent.*
- *If Jesus had been unable to defeat the devil when He suffered hunger and need in the wilderness, He would have been unable to face Calvary.*
- *However, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus’ total confidence and surrender to the will of His Father was perfectly expressed as He fully contemplated all the pain and suffering that Calvary held for Him as He prayed these words, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” (Luke 22:42).*
- *The greatest sacrifice Jesus made for us was His willingness to be separated from His Father, so we could be reconciled to the Father.*
- *While Jesus hung on the cross experiencing unspeakable agony—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—His greatest suffering was expressed with the words, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46).*
- *The words that Jesus spoke on the cross, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” do not reflect any doubt as to His Father’s goodness or faithfulness.*
- *Jesus continued to look to His Father in spite of the agony and abandonment He was experiencing as He became the sin offering for all of mankind. His words reflected His total confidence in the goodness and faithfulness of His Father, just as it was expressed prophetically. “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:10-11).*
- *Although Jesus felt abandoned and, forsaken, He continued to call on God. In His greatest need, He ran to God, and not away from God for He continued to trust in the goodness and faithfulness of His Father.*
- *How did Jesus respond to this first temptation and overcome it? The same way he responded and overcame every temptation, by turning to the Word of God, “It is written,” and standing on the Word of God.*
- *This is the key for us to be able to consistently overcome temptations—through our relationship with the Word of God.*

- *If our relationship with God is not founded solidly on His Word, then in the midst of trials and hardships we will doubt the character of God.*
- *Jesus' words rang out like a mighty two edged sword as it struck a fatal blow against the enemy. "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "*
- *Jesus knew the Word, believed the Word, obeyed the Word, and spoke the Word.*
- *When Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone," He was not saying that food was of no value. He was saying that spiritual bread, the Word of God, is of even greater value and importance. Jesus was spiritually minded.*
- *The naturally minded man puts all his effort into working to make sure he will have enough bread for tomorrow.*
- *The carnally minded man is simply fixated on eating the bread he has today.*
- *The spiritually minded man recognizes the importance of both natural and spiritual bread. While he recognizes the importance of natural bread, he also understands that spiritual bread is of greater importance, because it benefits him in this life and the next.*
- *Spiritually minded Christians seek the spiritual things above the natural things because they see eternal value in them. "But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12:31).*
- *Jesus' answer brought total defeat to the devil's temptation as Jesus affirmed His total confidence in His Father's love, faithfulness, and generous provision. 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*
- *Jesus' total confidence and surrender to His Father was not misplaced, but was wonderfully rewarded.*
- *After Jesus overcame the three temptations in the wilderness His Father was there to wonderfully meet His needs. "Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him." (Matthew 4:11).*
- *Even more glorious was the result of Jesus' willingness to become the sacrificial Lamb of God, endure the suffering, and die at Calvary. Apostle John testified. "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death." (Revelation 1:17-18).*

- *Through Jesus' own sacrifice He took back from the devil the very thing the devil feigned to offer Him, the kingdoms of this world, "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15).*
- *Because Jesus willingly submitted to the will of His Father, even when it meant going to the cross to redeem us, the devil who tempted Jesus to worship him will ultimately bow the knee and worship Jesus. "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:8–11).*
- *One of the keys in our relationship to the Word of God is thoroughness, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." We can have the whole loaf, not just crumbs.*
- *As Christians we need to continually grow in our understanding of God's Word and see both the details and the broad brushstrokes that the Bible paints. Then the entire picture becomes clear to us, even as Paul said, "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20:27).*
- *For us to fully understand what Jesus meant when He rebuffed the devil's temptation by saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,' " we need to look at where it is written so can we study it in context.*

Deuteronomy 8:1–5 (NKJV)

¹“Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers.

²And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

³So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

⁴Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

⁵You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.

- *God exhorted Israel as they prepared to enter the Promised Land. “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe.”*
- *God’s motivation was from a heart of love, so He could bless and prosper them and that they would be able to fulfill all that God had for them, “that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers.”*
- *Then God pointed out the purpose of their forty year excursion in the wilderness: “to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.”*
- *Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness, fasting and waiting upon God, so that He could be found worthy to enter into the ministry that His Father had for Him—to be the Saviour of the world.*
- *During Israel’s forty-year trek in the wilderness, God proved Himself faithful time and time again as He “fed you with manna which you did not know” and “Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.”*
- *God wanted to teach them a most important truth that would anchor them in their relationship with Him, “that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”*
- *The way God teaches us this important truth that “man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD” is by allowing us to experience circumstances that humble us where we can trust in nothing else and no one but God alone and His Word. “So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna.”*
- *there were two pieces that spoke directly about the Word of God:*
 - *The Bronze Laver*
 - *The Table of Showbread*
 - *was made of solid bronze and was located in the outer court, while the Table of Showbread was made of wood overlaid with beaten gold and it was located in the Holy Place where only the priest could enter.*
 - *laver is where the priests washed so that they could minister unto the Lord, the Table of Showbread is one of the places they personally ministered unto the Lord.*
 - *The bread placed on the Table was called “showbread.” It could also be translated as “the bread of the presence” or “the bread of the face.” (Exodus 25:30).*

- *At the laver the priests would bend over and see their own reflection as they took water to wash their hands and feet in preparation before ministering to the Lord.*
- *At the Table of Showbread the face or presence of God would be revealed. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 3:18).*
- *The Table of Showbread along with the Showbread itself speaks about our relationship with the Word of God in terms of doctrine and learning about the character of God.*
- *The Showbread is also a prophetic revelation of Jesus Christ, “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:48).*
- *The manna in the wilderness represents God’s temporary provision to sustain our natural lives, but the Showbread represents Christ who has come to give us eternal life. “Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.” (John 6:49-51).*
- *Just as “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), the Showbread was to be continually before the priests at the Table of Showbread. “And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.” (Exodus 25:30). In contrast to the Showbread, the manna in the wilderness melted away each morning and was only necessary for their forty-year journey through the wilderness.*
- *God provided supernaturally for all the needs of Israel. All that was required of them was to collect the manna that appeared on the ground each day, yet they grumbled against God and against His provision. “but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!” (Numbers 11:6).*
- *Israel agreed with the devil that God was not faithful and His provisions were unacceptable.*
- *Israel continually misrepresented the loving and faithful character of God, who had delivered them from the oppression and slavery of Egypt. In fact, they wanted to return back to the slavery of Egypt, “whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt.” (Acts 7:39).*

- *A carnally minded Christian sees God as One who is there just to make them happy and supply their needs. “Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.” (John 6:26).*
- *God has something much more wonderful for us if we are willing to come before the Table of Showbread and to experience His presence, learn from His Word, to know His heart and to be filled with the wonders of His salvation. “For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands. O LORD, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep.” (Psalm 92:4-5).*
- *Jesus warns us: “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him” but we must come to the Table of Showbread and partake of His Word so that we can do the works of God, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (John 6:27-29).*
- *If we remain carnally or naturally minded we will eventually become extremely disillusioned and disappointed, because no matter what we achieve or how successful we may appear, we will learn that none of the things in this life will provide us true and lasting satisfaction. “He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10).*
- *If we do not learn to stay at the Table of Showbread and feast upon His Word we will soon find ourselves agreeing with the devil and complaining that God is not fair and He is not faithful.*
- *Some Christians will protest and say, “I never complain against God or speak against Him.” The truth is that if you are not continually giving thanks to God, then you are complaining against Him and have come into agreement with the devil. God’s will for your life is that “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).*
- *David knew the secret of how to find peace even in the midst of turmoil and difficult circumstances. He would simply step up to the banqueting table of God’s Word that had been set for him. “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.”(Psalm 23:5–6).*
- *Carnally and naturally minded Christians will react to unfavorable circumstances by complaining against God and His provision. “Yes, they spoke*

**against God: They said, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?”
(Psalm 78:19).**

- ***However, spiritually minded Christians will answer the question, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?” with a resounding “Yes!” as they sit down before the Table of Showbread to feast on a meal of God’s Word.***
- ***Next week we will continue to explore how to develop a relationship with the Word of God.***